

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

what you write me, that Antichrist and his members
are seeking
diligently to have you in their hands, do not fear ; for
God is
strong enough to take light and power from them, so
that they
may not accomplish their desires. And you should
also think
that you are not worthy of so great a good, and,
therefore, need
not be afraid. Have confidence ; for sweet Mary
and the Truth
will be always with you. I, a vile slave, who am set
on the field
where blood has been shed for love of the blood (and
you have
left me here, and are gone away in God's name), will
never cease
working for you. I beseech you to act so that you
give me no
matter for tears, nor for being ashamed in the sight
of God. As
you are a man in promising to do and to bear for the
honour of
God, do not be now a woman when we come to the
point; for
I should appeal from you to Christ crucified
and to Mary.
Beware lest He deal with you as He did with the
Abbot of Sant'
Antimo, who, for fear and under colour of not
tempting God,
left Siena and came to Rome, thinking to have
escaped prison
and to be safe ; and he was put in prison, with the
penalty that
you know. Thus are pusillanimous hearts served.
Then be
utterly manly, so that death may come to you.
Know that I
should not be here now, if it had been possible to go
safely; but
it was impossible, by sea or by land ; for it was
decided that I
should go to Naples. Pray, and bid others pray to
God and
Mary, that He may make us do what is His honour.
Fra

Bartolommeo, the Master, Fra Matteo, and the others
are ready
to do whatever needs, for the honour of God and the
utility of
Holy Church, and to do violence to their own
weakness. They
and all the others commend themselves to you;
the *Nonna*
blesses you ; and I ask your blessing, and beseech
you to pardon
me, if I have said anything contrary to the honour of
God and
the reverence I owe you. Let my love
excuse me."¹

The reference to the imprisonment of Fra
Giovanni di Gano shows that yet another of
Catherine's disciples had disappointed

¹ Letter 344 (101), with unpublished passages from the
Casanatense MS. 292. A reference to the state of Naples, and
the papal mission to the King of Hungary, shows this letter was
not written before the latter part of June, 1379.